



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## NOAA Announces the Extension of the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Recreational Sector Separation Provisions

### *Small Entity Compliance Guide*

NOAA Fisheries approved Amendment 45 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (Amendment 45) submitted by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council). A final rule implementing these measures will publish in the *Federal Register* on December 2, 2016, with an effective date of January 3, 2017<sup>1</sup>. The Council approved Amendment 45 to extend the 2017 sunset provision by five years for the recreational red snapper sector separation regulations.

### **History of the sector separation provisions**

The sector separation provisions were implemented in May 2015 through the final rule for Amendment 40 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (Amendment 40). Amendment 40 specified sub-quotas, annual catch targets, and accountability measures for the federal for-hire and private angling components of the recreational sector. The purpose of this amendment was to increase flexibility in future management of the recreational sector fishing for red snapper and reduce the chance for recreational quota overruns. For more information on Amendment 40, see [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_fisheries/reef\\_fish/2013/am40/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2013/am40/index.html).

The final rule for Amendment 40 also put in place a three-year sunset provision for sector separation. Unless modified, the sector separation measures expire after December 31, 2017, which means the recreational sector would again be managed as a single entity.

The Council is currently working to develop and approve actions to address the management of charter vessel and headboat fishing within the federal for-hire component. If approved by NOAA Fisheries, these actions likely would not be effective until after the sector separation provisions expire at the end of 2017. Therefore, the Council determined there was a need to extend the sunset provision for an additional five years past the original sunset date.

### **Management Measure**

The rule extends the sunset provision from the end of the 2017 fishing year (December 31, 2017) to the end of the 2022 fishing year (December 31, 2022).

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Electronic copies of the amendment, final rule, and season notification may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Web site: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>. For more information on Amendment 45, visit [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_fisheries/reef\\_fish/2016/am45/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2016/am45/index.html).

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

<sup>1</sup> Note the effective date was erroneously set by Office of the Federal Register (OFR) in the final rule as January 3, 2016. This date is being corrected by the OFR to January 3, 2017.